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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 007529

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CVIS](#) [CPAS](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#) [KINR](#)

SUBJECT: IRAQ BORDER UPDATE

REF: A. AMMAN 5399

[B](#). AMMAN 6968

[C](#). AMMAN 3677

Classified By: CDA David Hale for reasons 1.5 (b), (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Jordanian security officials at the Karameh border crossing have eased restrictions on the entry of Iraqis. Communications between Jordanian and Iraqi border officials remain poor, and Iraqi border officials are, reportedly, demanding bribes at numerous "check points" prior to final clearance into Iraq. A Jordanian border official also alleged that Iraqi border officials are passing vehicle information to Iraqi racketeers and/or insurgents. End Summary.

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JORDAN NOT RESTRICTING IRAQIS  
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[1](#)2. (C) The Jordanian border liaison chief at the Karameh border crossing, Ashraf Taha Aldmour, told PolOff during a visit to Karameh August 23 that Jordanian border officials had loosened restrictions on the entry of Iraqis, including the passage of entire families. This was a response to King Abdullah's June 28 directive to address long delays of vehicles and people at the border (ref A). He believed that most of the Iraqis now being allowed through, particularly those traveling as families, intended to stay in Jordan. He said most of the Iraqis still denied entry were those presenting altered passports, mainly of the new Iraqi S-series passport (ref B). The most common tactic used was to pass back "authentic" S-series passports for photo and/or name substitution. Aldmour also said that most of the Iraqis presenting these altered passports had previously stayed illegally in Jordan and were trying to avoid re-entry fines of 1.5 Jordan Dinar (JD) (approximately 2 USD) for each day stayed beyond period of legal admission. He disputed recent local media reports, saying there was no noticeable increase in the number of Iraqi Christians trying to enter Jordan at the Karameh border.

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POOR COMMUNICATION; MORE BRIBERY ALLEGATIONS  
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[1](#)3. (C) Aldmour said that communications between the Iraqi and Jordanian border officials remained poor (ref A), stemming, he said, from a constant change in Iraqi border official personnel and leadership. He never knew who was in charge from day to day on the Iraqi side of the frontier; it depended on "who answered the telephone." Nearly all of the Iraqi border officials, he said, came from the Aldlaimeh tribe (one of the largest Sunni tribes in the Al Anbar province). He also said that information-sharing was difficult. He cited several instances where Iraqi border officials "took it personally", threatening to restrict the entry of Jordanians into Iraq, when the Jordanians denied entrance to Iraqis.

[1](#)4. (C) According to Aldmour, Iraqi border officials demanded bribes regularly from travelers going into and out of Iraq (ref C). Aldmour said that although the Iraqi border officials had yet to deny entry to any Jordanians, they made life difficult, as travelers were required to stop at several "check points". Observing from the Jordanian side, PolOff could see all six "check points", clusters of un-uniformed Iraqi men on the road every 25 yards or so, with no signs identifying their function, stopping each car, talking to the drivers, and then waving them on. (Separately, multi-national forces (MNF) border personnel also told PolOff that most of the Iraqi border officials were from the same tribe and alleged that bribe demands occurred whenever MNF were not present.)

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IRAQI GUARDS SAID PASSING VEHICLE INFORMATION  
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[1](#)5. (C) Aldmour alleged Iraqi border officials are passing commercial vehicle information--license plate numbers, vehicle and driver nationality, cargo, and border departure time--to, he speculated, racketeers and/or insurgents in Iraq. He claimed to have regularly observed these Iraqi officials speaking into their cell phones as vehicles cleared the border crossing and headed into Iraq.

16. (U) Baghdad minimize considered.

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HALE